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Non-students are college-age and older youth who have had some college education but are not formal students or members of the labor force, are potentially creative individuals, and are attracted to academic environments. At Berkeley there are approximately 3,000 of these non-conformist college dropouts, 151 of whom volunteered to participate in a socio-psychological study by responding to an interview questionnaire and several psychological instruments. A random sample of 56 Berkeley students was used as a reference group. A comparison of study data reveals, along with contrasting personality differences, that the non-students' creative and intellectual dispositions are positively related to their vocational choices and that regular students tend to follow the dictates of family, school and society regarding their careers. The formation of the dropout subculture may have been precipitated by society's failure to accommodate their individual developmental needs by easing their transition into responsible adulthood. Social withdrawal is their answer to a rigidity in higher education offerings that conflicts with their intellectual and creative interests. Their alienation reflects an awareness of the low marketability, yet highly competitive nature in our society of the creative or fine arts, and the need for opportunity of expression in current academic structures. (WM)

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VOCATIONAL DISPOSITIONS OF THE NONCONFORMIST, COLLEGIATE DROPOUTS

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Vocational Dispositions of the Nonconformist, Collegiate Dropouts[1]

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General Introduction

It is a cultural fact that youth and adulthood are considered two rather differentiated periods in the life cycle. Anthropologists have repeatedly shown that preliterate societies tend to institutionalize the transition from one stage to the other. In contemporary Western society, however, a paradox lies in the fact that the transition period has been continually extended and the formal boundaries correspondingly made more ambiguous. Within this context of the opportunity to prolong socialization into adult roles, the conditions were set for a wide-spread youth culture.

This relatively recent tradition of a pervasive, and diversified, youth culture has become an increasingly important social phenomenon. The postponement of the granting of adult status, i.e., responsibility, imposed upon youth is taking place concomitantly within a society that reflects not only rapid social and technological change but also lag and imbalance--and it is a truth so universal as to be almost tautological that such a condition will inevitably produce social and psychological conflicts for youth, as well as others, who must somehow adapt to the strains thus created.

Erikson (1959) has characterized our youth culture as a psycho-social moratorium on adulthood which serves a positive function in resolving generational discontinuities. The span of time provides adolescents and young adults with an opportunity to complete their primary task of forming and achieving a sense of self-identity. The word "achieve" is crucial here. Identity is not simply given by the society in

which the young person lives. He must make his own unique synthesis of the often incompatible models and ideals offered by society. The more incompatible and changing the present components from which the sense of identity must be built and the more uncertain the future for which one attempts to achieve identity, the more difficult the task becomes.

This psychologically important task by no means characterizes all young Americans to the same degree. For the majority of our youth in their teens and early twenties--members of the extensive subculture typically distinguished for its conformity both to the dominant mores of the mass youth cult and current values of society--the period of identity formation is normally weathered with relatively little prolonged or deep strain (Katz and Sanford, 1966). Such individuals have learned the practice of ego-restriction in order to avoid psychological crises. Others have painfully and defiantly struggled to develop and establish the uniqueness of their identity. Those individuals most affected by identification crises are youth who strongly perceive a sense of frustration. Generally, this frustration is associated with a feeling of alienation, a feeling of being outside the mainstream of society, regardless of whether the affect towards society is positive, negative, or ambivalent, and is manifested in psychological forms by maladjustment and/or in social forms by non-conformity or deviance.

To social scientists basically interested in the area of adolescent and post-adolescent youth, such individuals are important foci of research, especially those youth with a propensity for seeking their identity within the socially vanguard positions already existing within the framework of American society and who generally feel most acutely the strains of, and for, social change. Subculturally, by their very deviance from the social norm, they not only help define that norm by juxtaposition but also offer alternatives for social change. However, the particular descriptive, often disjunctive, variables directly and indirectly indicate various combinations of social and psychological stress, adaptation, fulfillment and failure.

Subjects and Method

Recently, both public and academic attention has been directed towards non-conforming youth subcultures. One such social manifestation, among others, is particularly prevalent at the University of California at Berkeley and also characteristic of a number of other major universities such as Harvard, Wisconsin and Columbia: a subculture or "underground" of non-students. They represent a diverse collection of collegiate-age youth and their older counterparts who are, in a way, an epitome of those young people separated from the traditional middle-class and its values. Non-students--a term, by the way, with generally unsympathetic connotations in the public mind--are persons who are neither formally registered as students nor members of the conventional work force, but who have mingling associations and impacts with student culture and vice versa. Most have had some college education, having dropped out, indefinitely, and while often professing disdain for formal academic study and its stifling effects they are attracted nevertheless to the university environs as a source of social, cultural and intellectual stimulation, acceptance and sanctuary. They live a marginal existence reflective of their unconventional role.

To classify Berkeley's non-student subculture in too general a way may be an oversimplification. The group has been unofficially estimated to contain a floating membership of approximately 3,000, and to the astute observer it obviously is a very diverse community. However, regardless of the individuality of its membership, the major characteristics of the subculture tend to make themselves known and thus attract other members of a compatible nature. It is, basically, a libertarian society illustrative of a critical reaction against social hypocrises, restricted standards, the materialistic way of life and the dehumanizing influences of modern institutions. In the historical context, they are a contemporary expres-

sion within the long tradition of bohemian, rebelling, non-conforming youth succinctly discussed by Matza (1961).

This paper is based on partial data from a comprehensive socio-psychological study of 151 Berkeley non-students who volunteered to undergo intensive probing by responding to a lengthy interview questionnaire and a number of psychological instruments. Because there was no possibility of obtaining a representative sample of the subculture since the parameters of this population are rather ill-defined and changing, a method referred to by Campbell and Pettigrew (1959) as the "snowball technique" was used. By this method all available accesses into the particular group are initially used and other respondents gained by a referral method. Enough different inroads were used in recruiting the subjects that they likely typify a fairly broad range of this population. Almost without exception the subjects were conscientious in their responses, uninhibited, and generally stimulated by the focus of the research materials.

For comparative purposes a cross-section of the University of California student body at Berkeley, a rather scholastically elite population of youth, seemed obviously appropriate as a reference group in this initial phase of the study and was randomly obtained. This sample of 56 students was, by comparison, more "clean cut" in appearance and tended to be somewhat more placid in their behavior during the data collection, a stance perhaps defined by their student role. Approximately two-thirds of the subjects in each sample, selected without bias, were males. The average age within the two groups was similar, approximately twenty-one.

Biographical, Sociological and Psychological Background

The basic descriptive data that differentiated the non-student from the student sample gives pertinent, contrasting information. Summarizing some of the statistically significant group differences. the non-students, as compared to the students, were: more nonconforming in their personal grooming and attire; more estranged from their families in terms of contactual indices as well as in the extent to which

they disagree about intellectual, religious, and political concepts and the subjects' future goals; more financially on their own but less employed; more dissatisfied with their previous formal education; under-represented in the major political parties and far more active in such organizations as CORE and SNCC and in civil rights affairs and protesting the war in Vietnam; less oriented towards the traditional, formal religions; more inclined to approve of marriage age to be in the late, rather than early, twenties; more tolerant towards non-marital sexuality and homosexuality; and more likely to spontaneously mention experimenting with drugs (Watts and Whittaker, 1967).

Psychologically, many significant mean differences between the two groups were noted on the basis of formal instruments (Whittaker, 1967). On these tools the males and females of the non-student sample tended to have very similar profiles. The non-student profiles also were more pronounced, having both higher and lower variables, with smaller standard deviations, similarly indicating, expectedly, the homogeneity of the group. As generally the same individual scale comparisons, between samples, by sex, statistically differentiated the non-students from the students, data could often be collapsed within groups for simplification of presentation without loss of information.

Significantly unlike students on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values (1960), non-student group results for both sexes rank-ordered the values in the same manner: Esthetic (high), Theoretical, Social, Political, Religious, Economic (low). The extreme scales were particularly divergent. The student males were high on Theoretical and Political, low on Social and Religious and the student females were high on Esthetic and Theoretical and Low on Economic and Religious. The non-students were significantly higher on Esetheticism, Complexity, Autonomy, Religious (liberal) Orientation, and Impulse Expression and lower on Personal Integration, Anxiety Level (more anxious), Practical Outlook, Masculinity, and Response Bias as measured by the Omnibus Personality Inventory (Heist and Yonge, 1967). On the Adjective Check List (Gough and Heilbrun, 1965), where the student group profiles remained relatively near

the norms, the non-students scored significantly higher on Lability and lower on Self-Control and Personal Adjustment; on the need scales, non-students were higher on Autonomy, Change, Exhibition, Succorance, and lower on Order, Endurance, Deference, Achievement, and Dominance.

In general an integrated interpretation of the psychological data results in a composite portrait of the non-student, as contrasted to the student, as being more intellectually disposed and potentially creative, more independent and nonconformist, more flexible and less authoritarian, more feminine, more alienated and psychologically maladjusted (but certainly not pathologically), displaying a greater propensity towards impulsivity, novelty seeking, avoidance of routine and competitive confrontation, and presently somewhat ineffective, especially in academia as generally structured, due to strong psychological needs coupled with reduced self-disciplinary controls. The group profile presents a stereotypic pattern suggestive of, among other things, a syndrome of personality conflict and stressful identity seeking.

Vocational Disposition

A. Academic Major:

The subjects were asked to state their previous, present, or intended, college majors as an initial indication of vocational orientation. A much larger proportion of non-students than students majored, or intended to major, in the Creative or Fine Arts (25 percent non-students compared to 7 percent students) and the Humanities (38 percent and 25 percent, respectively). The non-students were under-represented in the more pragmatic fields such as Business, the Physical and Biological Sciences, and Engineering. There was little difference in the representation from the Social Sciences (26 percent for non-students versus 30 percent for students). Approximately half of the students registered they felt various degrees of uncertainty as to the wisdom of their choice of major. Non-students were more uncertain but this was, of course, ex post facto.

B. Tentative Vocational Decision:

A further index of vocational commitment was obtained from the responses to the question concerning what, if any, tentative vocational choices have been made. The most obvious difference between the subgroups is the significantly greater mention of vocations associated with the creative arts on the part of the male and female non-students. Such responses as artist, sculptor, architect, decorator, writer, poet, singer, dancer, musician, actor, drama director, film maker, etc. were subsumed under this rubric. These creative, communicative occupations were tentatively chosen by two-thirds of the non-student males and females and reflect the apparently strong esthetic and expressive interests of this group. Correspondingly, 14 percent of the male and, 30 percent of the female, students mentioned such occupations.

Another indication of the non-students' less pragmatic orientation, and significantly so, is that only 8 percent of the non-student males tentatively chose vocations within the theoretical and applied sciences, law or business, whereas 58 percent of the student males did so. Similarly, only 19 percent of the non-student females indicated teaching, and none the sciences, whereas 50 percent of the student females chose teaching and 10 percent the sciences. There were no differences between non-student and student males regarding teaching. Approximately 15 percent in both cases made such references. Nor were there significant differences concerning the Social Sciences and Humanities as 4 percent of the male, and 10 percent of the female, non-students mentioned such tentative vocational areas as did approximately 10 percent of both the male and female students. Lastly, about 10 percent of the non-students of each sex either had made no decisions, even tentatively, or responded with vocationally non-committed statements such as "being free," "living," "being a person," "wanderer," etc. All students made a tentative, formal vocational choice.

Following this question, the subjects were asked how certain they felt about their tentative vocational choice. There was little difference between group or sex. Approximately 70 percent stated varying degrees of being certain and, of

course, the remaining 30 percent responded with varying degrees of uncertainty.

It was interesting to observe the indication of a shift, especially on the part of non-students but also reflected by students, between the academic major responses and the tentative vocational decisions. To the extent that the categories in each case are somewhat comparable, note that a quarter of the non-students had majored, or intended to major, in the Creative or Fine Arts whereas three-fifths tentatively chose vocations in such an area. This shift was apparently at the expense of the Humanities and Social Sciences where one-third and one-quarter, respectively, had majored but less than one-tenth chose occupations in these areas.

C. Ideal Vocational Choice:

At a later point in the data collection a freer, more imaginative, less mundane, open-ended question was presented in order to note yet another facet of personal and/or vocational orientation. The subjects were asked, "If anything were possible, what would you ideally like to be?" The responses were diverse and eventually a classification system was developed utilizing 15 general categories. Again, contrasting the four subgroups, the male and female non-student group responses were rather similar; the female student responses were somewhat related to female non-students; and the male students were most divergent from the others in terms of their continuing, more traditionally vocational responses.

The five or six most frequent categories obtained for each of the four subgroups accounted for approximately 80 percent of their individual responses. The male non-students most frequent response category (28 percent) was that labelled Individualistic Person as reference was made not to a vocation per se but to a desire for unique, personal development. This was followed, in descending rank order, by categories Creative Artist (27 percent), Versatile Person (two or more contrasting response-concepts mentioned), and equally Educator and Religious-Mystic. Rather similarly, female non-student categories in rank order were: Individualistic Person (21 percent), Creative Artist (20 percent), equally Versatile Person and Educator, and

then Social Servant. The female student categories were somewhat the same but in different rank order: Educator (24 percent), Versatile Person, Social Servant, and equally Individualistic Person, Creative Artist, and Governmental-Politico. Contrastingly, male student rankings were: Governmental-Politico (28 percent), equally Individualistic Person and Social Servant, and then equally Versatile Person and Scientific Researcher. It is significant that the non-student male and female responses resulted in first place rank-ordering for the category Individualistic Person, the category primarily concerned with answers involving ideal, personal self-development, and that such responses indicated that these individuals projectively reacted to the personality, rather than vocation, possibilities of the unstructured question. Also of importance is the fact that both male and female non-student replies resulted in Creative Artist as the immediate second most frequent category. This category reflects esthetic interests, needs for creative self-expression and, in all likelihood, sensitivity to the introspective and emtional self.

D. Avocational Creative Needs:

The three previous areas of occupational orientation--academic major, tentative vocational choice and ideal existence--indicated that the esthetic, creative focus was significantly stressed more often by the non-students in comparison to student responses. Observational data would predict such a trend. An open-ended item was included in the questionnaire that might tap not only the vocational expression but also the avocational motivation to creative behavior on the part of the subjects, especially those not involved in the areas traditionally defined as "creative." Regardless of their previous responses, when asked if they had the urge to express themselves creatively, approximately 95 percent of the male and female non-students replied in the affirmative and 80 percent of the female, and 75 percent of male, students similarly responded. In respect to those who answered "Yes," the response to "If so, how?" resulted in the use of 12 categories and a rather similar frequency distribution for the four subgroups. The Music, Drawing-Painting, and Writing (prose,

poetry, plays) categories each equally accounted for approximately 20 to 25 percent of the responses in each of the subgroups and thus included two-thirds to three-quarters of each distribution. In the remaining, less frequently used categories, there was a strong tendency for non-student and student females to mention Dance as compared to their male counterparts. These results indicate, particularly in conjunction with the previous findings, that although more non-students than students are vocationally oriented towards the Creative Arts, even those non-students that are not so oriented apparently are aware of such urges avocationally. Such tendencies are part of the basic creative syndrome. Considering the previous trend of the pragmatic disposition within student vocational foci, in conjunction with the psychological data, especially in the males, their artistic, creative urges might be tentatively considered as less vocationally centered and more secondarily, avocationally oriented.

E. Strong Vocational Interest Blank for Men:

Because people successfully engaged in particular occupations have a characteristic set of interests, the Strong Vocational Interest Blank for Men and Women (1959) was administered to the subgroups in order to compare their interest patterns in terms of such people established in various occupations. The instrument, of course, does not measure ability and only indirectly does it tap a facet of motivation with respect to vocational choice.

Of the 50 occupational scales available on the SVIB for Men, 21 scales significantly differentiated the non-student mean scores from those of the student males. On 8 of the scales the non-students scored higher than the student males. A listing of these occupations leads to an obvious description and interpretation of the male non-students' general orientation. The non-student significantly higher scales, arranged in descending hierarchical order, were: Musician, Author-Journalist, Artist, Psychologist, Advertising Man, Architect, Music Teacher and Minister. The general emphasis is centered around the professional, independent, intellectual as-

pects of their interests along with the fundamentally artistic, esthetic, creative character, whether musical, literary, or visual, previously indicated. The social welfare interest, as reflected by Minister and, to a much lesser degree, by Psychologist, appears to be a secondary vocational element present within the profile.

The average non-student male's interests are further described by the contrasting data indicating the 13 occupational scales on which non-student scores were significantly lower and thus vocational areas in which non-student interests were particularly dissimilar not merely in terms of student scores but also comparative to men in such vocations. These non-student low scales, arranged in ascending rank order, were: Purchasing Agent, Accountant, Army Officer, Banker, Office Worker, Sales Manager, Production Manager, Credit Manager, Senior C.P.A., Personnel Manager, Pharmacist, C.P.A. Owner and Public Administrator. The major finding here is the obvious conclusion that non-student interests were not in harmony with those of persons in occupations emphasizing business detail and administrative responsibility whereas student males, comparatively, were more inclined to simulate them. These non-student results can be interpreted as implying not just indifference to, or lack of interest in, the kinds of activities in which the members of such occupations like but an active rejection of them (Darley and Hegenah, 1955). Note also that the occupations within this "reject pattern" of the non-student males tend to stress such underlying commonalities as the competitive qualities required in business and the pragmatic outlook.

No significant difference between the male subgroups was indicated on the Specialization Level scale, which was high in both cases and which tentatively can be interpreted as measuring the positive desire or willingness to narrow their interests, to become specialized. Similarly, the Occupational Level scores showed no significant difference. The scores here, too, were particularly high and may be safely interpreted as suggesting that male non-students, and students, hold interests similar to those who have achieved professional status and reflect, to some degree,

intellectual maturity, level aspiration, and the sociocultural level of interests. Non-students scored high on Interest Maturity but students scored significantly higher which suggests that non-students, comparatively, tend to be less socially mature and less well-organized. Non-students, as expected, were significantly lower on the Masculinity scale. This scale, which measures the similarity of a man's interests to the average of his own sex, is a continuum based on the extent to which attention is held by technical, depersonalized activities or by cultural, esthetic, personalized, symbolic activities. Artist, Music Teacher, and Author-Journalist are the most feminine criterion groups among men, and these occupation scales for non-students are, of course, in correlational agreement with the variable.

An indirect indication of intellectual orientation can be obtained from SVIB-M scores using a method devised by Weissman (1958). The system enables a profile to be assigned to one of ten sub-categories, the major differentiation between sub-categories being on a continuum assessing intellectual disposition. The method is based on the total configuration of scale scores and with reference to the prime, dispositional core of the technique using the Artist, Psychologist, Architect, Physician, and Author-Journalist scales.

Within the highest intellectual disposition subcategory, reflecting an intellectual curiosity centered on the world of ideas, concepts, and theory, often without tangible subject focus, significantly fell 29 percent of the male non-student profiles whereas no student profiles were so classified. This sub-category is uniquely differentiated from the others by the fact that such profiles do not reflect a definite subject area or general occupational focus. The next two sub-categories are basically theoretical and intellectually centered on the areas of science and social behavior, respectively. Approximately 15 percent of both the non-student and student male profiles fell in each of these sub-categories. These three sub-categories are subsumed under the first major category titled Theoretical, and thus 60 percent of the non-students were included here as were 31 percent of the

students.

The following major category, labelled Applied-Professional, representing a less theoretical and more applied orientation, contains 5 sub-categorizations: Biological Science, Technical, Welfare, Business and Verbal. Here the proportions were reversed as 32 percent of the non-students were placed in the major category whereas 66 percent of the students were so placed. Non-students mainly fell within the Welfare sub-category (20 percent) but students were distributed relatively evenly throughout the category's sub-categories. The remaining few male subjects in both groups fell either into the Applied-Technical category at the other extre of the intellectual disposition or had "flat" profiles that could not be classified.

The significant differences between the non-student and student distributions within the first two major categories basically suggests that non-student males tended to be more concerned with speculative and creative thought and the spirit of inquiry than the student males who were more disposed towards the responsible application of principles within certain broad areas of interest.

F. Strong Vocational Interest Blank for Women:

The SVIB for Woman, although perhaps a less useful instrument than the form for men is, resulted in somewhat the same basic difference between non-student and student females as noted for the counterpart males. Of the 31 occupation scales available, 11 individual scale comparisons significantly differentiated the two subgroups. Author, Artist and Music Performer, in rank order, were the only scales on which the non-student females surpassed the comparative student subgroup. In ascending order, the following 8 occupation scales were found to be significantly lower for non-students as contrasted to students: Home Economics Teacher, Dietitian, H.S. Physical Education Teacher, Nurse, Mathematics-Science Teacher, Dentist, Laboratory Technician and Physical Therapist.

The women's occupations have not been so accurately grouped or very precisely classified as the men's scales. The problem may be due to a more basically complex, subtle, covert array of interests in females. In any case, there appear to be more factors in the female form than in the male, even though there is a substantially larger number of scales in the latter case (Anderson, 1965). Nevertheless, the female non-student-student results parallel those of the males. Non-student female interests are reflected in the high scoring, esthetic, creative occupation scales. Other scales,with high scores but not significantly differentiated from student scores, such as Librarian, Social worker, Psychologist, and Physician, emphasize an intellectual, professional, socio-cultural commitment accompanying the esthetic interest. The significantly low scores that are part of the female non-student reject pattern are concerned quite directly with clerical, teaching and bio-technical duties and are suggestive of a somewhat more ordered, routinized occupational syndrome.

Conclusion

The socio-psychological indications of the non-students' significant non-conformist, esthetic, creative and intellectual dispositions and their related vocational orientation are concomitant, in all likelihood, not only with the classic problems of adolescence and post-adolescence and the contemporary difficulties regarding vocational decision-making faced by many youth today but also the traditional alienation, or rejection of, society that is a theme of the intellectual-esthete at least as old as Romanticism. Until rather recently, the overwhelming proportion of such alienation, as well as other forms, in American youth was expressed in private ways. The present trend is one of more visability, if not actual increment, and the formation of explicit, youth subcultures. Society's failure to reasonably provide for youths' transition and integration into responsible adulthood and to accommodate their developmental needs remains a central social concern.

The elements of social withdrawal on the part of the non-student membership into the subculture proper at the expense of more"positive" approaches, as traditionally defined, is understandable. Certainly the psychological pressure on such persons to withdraw from formal education, an environment permeated with conflicting pressure on the creative, non-conforming personality to assume a stance of self-denial, routinized behavior and competitive achievement within irrelevant, regidified subject areas, is fairly inevitable regardless of basic intellectual ability. In general, such individuals cannot easily satisfy their needs within the academic setting as it is often presently structured. Although it is true that certain such individuals traditionally have found the possibility of fulfillment only outside of academia, in all likelihood most do not--and they represent a potential loss to society.

The occupational interests, or dispositions, of the subjects of this paper are a function of their psychological needs and their strivings to develop personally acceptable self-concepts. They have high esthetically creative interests, presently untapped ability (although of unknown level), but are denied entry into such self-expressive vocational positions. The products and efforts of the creative arts in general basically are not easily or happily marketable in our society. Furthermore, the area is highly competitive. Non-student alienation, and dropping out not only from school but from the normative structure of society, is a reflection, perhaps, of the cognizance of the pressure to make vocational decisions and the realization that restriction of possible achievement is imminent.

Higher education--society--has an obligation to help our dropouts, especially potentially creative individuals, avoid vocational bankruptcy. The continuing challenge is to find ways to accommodate such individuals who differ from the more conforming types of youth.

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Footnote

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